JAPAN PATENT OFFICE (JP)
PUBLICATION OF UNEXAMINED PATENT APPLICATION (A)
Patent Application Laid-Open Number: Hei-3-136683
Publication Date: June 11, 1991

Int.Cl.	ID No.	Ref. No.
A 63 F 5/04	512	6777-2C
7/02	337	6935-2C
9/00	512	6777-2C
G 06 K 17/00		6711-5B

Request for Examination: Not filed, Number of Invention: 1, (13 pages in total)

Title of the Invention: Slot-type game machine
Patent Application Number: JP Patent Application Hei-2-108612
Filing Date: December 25, 1986 (Date on which a prior U.M application was filed)
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Description

1. Title of the Invention

Slot-type game machine

2. Claim

A slot-type game machine that provides a game depending on the combination of symbol marks, characterized in that it comprises at least an information-card inlet/outlet, a data display for displaying the game-related information of the information card inserted into the inlet/outlet, a game-media inlet and a discharge device for discharging game media as prize, in which the game machine becomes ready to provide a game upon insertion of the information card into the inlet/outlet by a player, allows the discharge device to discharge a given number of game media corresponding to each combination of symbol marks as a result of the game played by the player, and becomes ready to provide another game upon insertion of the game media into the game-media inlet.

3. Detailed Description of the Invention

(Technical Field)

This invention relates to a slot-type game machine that is capable of being

first started upon the utilization of an information card, discharging game media as prize when a win condition has been met, and then providing the next and subsequent games upon insertion of the game media.

(Prior Arts)

A conventional slot-type game machine is described such as in Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. Sho-59-186581, in which the machine has an inlet for insertion of game media such as game coins on the front side, a discharge device for discharging game coins as prize disposed inside the machine so that a game cannot be started unless a coin is inserted into the inlet.

(Problems to be Solved by the Invention)

According to the above conventional slot-type game machine, it is necessary to get out coins by insertion of hard moneys (bills or coins) into a game coin lending machine for first starting a game. Because of this, a game shop must install a coin lending machine when it has a coin-operated game machine, and must frequently supply game coins to the coin lending machine. A management for supply of game coins is therefore troublesome.

A player who has run out game coins in hand during the game playing, he must leave a game machine to the coin lending machine to lend again game coins. This is very troublesome for the player.

(Means to Solve the Problems)

The present invention has been conceived in consideration of the above problem. Accordingly, there is provided a slot-type game machine that is provided with at least an information-card inlet/outlet, a data display for displaying the game-related information of the information card inserted into the inlet/outlet, a game-media inlet and a discharge device for discharging game media as prize, in which the game machine becomes ready to provide a game upon insertion of the information card into the inlet/outlet by a player, allows the discharge device to discharge a given number of game media corresponding to each combination of symbol marks as a result of the game played by the player, and becomes ready to provide another game upon insertion of the game media into the game-media inlet.

(Function)

When the player inserts an information card issued by a card issuing machine into the inlet/outlet port of the game machine, the game-related information of the information card is displayed on a data display, thereby allowing the game machine to become ready to provide a game. Then, the player plays the game. When the player has attained a prize combination of symbol marks as a

result of the game, a given number of game media corresponding to its prize condition are discharged by the actuation of the discharge device. Thus, the game machine becomes ready to provide the next and subsequent games upon insertion of the discharged game media, as well. When a prize condition is not met in the first game, the displayed value on the data display is subsequently subtracted so that a game can be played even without insertion of game media.

(Embodiments)

Now, the description will be made for the embodiments of this invention with reference to the drawings.

A card issuing machine 1 has, as illustrated in Fig. 1, a case 2 with an inclined surface 3 on which a coin inlet 4, an amount display unit 5, an amount selection switch 6 and a pilot lamp 7 are disposed, and on the lower side of the inclined surface 3, a bill inlet 9, a coin return port 10, a card issuing port 11, etc., are disposed and inside of the case 2, a coin sorter 12 for sorting coins inserted through the coin inlet 4, a bill checking unit 13 for checking bills inserted through the bill inlet 9, a bill storage unit 14 for storing bills determined as proper by the bill checking unit 13, a card writing unit 15 for writing information on a card in the card storage unit 18 and issuing a written card, etc., are disposed. The amount display unit 5, the amount selection switch 6, the pilot lamp 7, the coin sorter 12, the bill checking unit 13, the card writing unit 15, etc., are electrically connected to a control unit 16.

The card writing unit 15 has a conveyor means 17 such as in the form of belt conveyors disposed one above the other facing each other, having a first end extending to an outlet of the card storage unit 18 and a second end extending to the card issuing port 11, and on the middle of the conveyor means 17, an information writing unit 19 such as in the form of a magnetic head, a printing unit 20 and card detectors are disposed. A card-shortage detector 21 and a shutter unit 22 are provided at the outlet of the card storage unit 18. The thus arranged card writing unit 15 opens the shutter unit 22 upon receiving a card-issuing signal from the control unit 16, retrieves one card from the card storage unit 18, while actuating a motor 23, thereby conveying a retrieved information card 24 towards the card issuing port 11.

The information card 24 has a size substantially equivalent to a cash card or a credit card, and has a body in the form of a thin plate made of synthetic resin, paper, etc., on which a magnetic recording strip-like surface as an information storage part is provided along a card running direction. This magnetic recording

surface stores encrypted game-related information such as a scored-point code representative of the available number of times, card identification code for preventing unauthorized use of the card, etc., owned by the card.

When a first card detector 25 detects that the card 24 has been correctly conveyed and a second card detector 26 detects that a leading end of the card 24 has reached, and more specifically the magnetic recording surface of the card 24 has reached the information writing unit 19, the information writing unit 19 writes a shop code, a card issuing date, a scored-point code, a card-identification information, etc., on the card by magnetic action according to the signal from the control unit 16. The scored-point code is recorded according to the amount of the player's payment (the amount selected by the card issuing machine). When the payment is JPY(Japanese Yen) 100, a point of "5" is recorded. This point represents a minimum unit that the player can play the game. For writing the information, it may be encrypted so as to prevent unauthorized events.

When a third card detector 27 detects the card 24, the motor 23 suspends operations, during which the printing unit 20 prints on the card issue date upon the printing signal from the control unit 16. Subsequent to the finish of this printing step, the motor 23 starts to convey the card 24, and again suspends operations when a fourth card detector 28 detects the card 24, during which the printing unit 20 prints on the amount of money at the time of issuing. When the various information is thus written and the issue date, etc., are printed, the card 24 is discharged through the card issuing port 11. When a fourth card detector 28 detects the finish of discharging of the card 24, the motor 23 stops running.

According to the thus arranged card issuing machine 1, when the player inserts a coin such as a "100" yen coin through the coin inlet 4, the coin sorter 12 determines whether or not a coin is proper. An improper coin is returned through the coin return port 10, while a proper coin is detected by a coin detector (not shown) and stored in a coin storage section. When the player inserts a bill through the bill inlet 9, the bill checking unit 13 determines whether or not a bill is proper. An improper bill is returned, while a proper bill is detected by a bill detector and stored in a bill storage section 14. When the coin detector detects a proper coin, it sends a signal to the control unit 16. When the bill detector detects a proper bill, it also sends a signal to the control unit 16. Upon receipt of these signals, the control unit 16 displays the total amount of coins and bills inserted by the player on the amount display unit 5. The player checks the inserted amount by the display on the amount display unit 5 and then operates the amount

selection switch 6 to select a desirable amount within the displayed amount. Upon receipt of a signal from the amount selection switch 6, the control unit 16 sends a signal to the card writing unit 15, enabling the same to issue the information card 24 with a point (a game unit) written thereon corresponding to the amount selected by the player through the card issuing port 11. When the amount selected by the player is lower than the amount inserted through the inlets, the control unit 16 actuates a change discharger (not shown) to return the change.

The player who has received the information card 24 thus issued by the card issuing machine 1 chooses a game machine 29 of his/her choice, and inserts the information card 24 into a card inlet/outlet 30 of the game machine 29.

The game machine 29 has, as illustrated in Fig. 4, a machine frame having a size substantially equivalent to the size of a pachinko game machine so as to be able to be installed in a pachinko-game-machine installed line without the necessity of modification, a front panel 31 pivotally and detachably supported by a hinge mechanism disposed along one side of the machine frame so as to be opened and closed therearound. The front panel 31 is usually kept in a closed position by a locking mechanism (not shown) with respect to the machine frame.

The front panel 31 has at its front center a large display window 32, through which three rotation drums 33... with symbol marks 34... put on their circumferences are shown. A transparent plate such as a glass plate having an curved surface is fitted to the front side of the display window 32, which has on its surface five bet lines 35... Of the bet lines 35..., three bet lines 35 extending parallel above and below represent horizontal rows of the symbol marks 34, while the diagonally crossing bet lines 35 represent diagonal rows of the symbol marks 34. A game unit 36 incorporated with the rotation drums 33 is mounted to the front panel 31 from the back side thereof.

As illustrated in Figs. 5 and 6, the game unit 36 includes a unit frame 37, a rotation shaft 38 supported between the opposite side walls of the unit frame 37, a driving motor 39 for driving the rotation drums 33 and a rotation-drum driving mechanism made up of a speed reducing unit. The three rotation drums 33 are supported on the rotation shaft 38 independently of each other at intervals along the axis.

The rotation drums 33 each have a cylindrical shape, and display on its outer circumference different types of the symbol marks 34 such as orange, bell, lemon, cherry and diamond mark, as well as numbers such as "7". On one side of each rotation drum 33 is integrally fixed a stopper plate 41 with stopper grooves

40... oriented at the same angle as the symbol marks 34. An annular slip ring 43 with a slip surface 42 having a relatively high friction resistance, which is held in surface contact with an inner circumference of the rotation drum 33, is fitted around the axial center of each rotation drum 33. This slip spring 43 has one end secured to the rotation shaft 38 by a stopper ring, and another end pressed towards the stopper ring by a spring force of a coil spring 44.

The driving motor 39 and the speed reducing unit are secured to an outer surface of one side of the unit frame 37. The speed reducing unit has an output shaft with an output pulley fitted thereto. One end of the rotation shaft extends through one side of the unit frame 37 to have an extension with an input pulley 46 fitted thereto. A driving belt 47 runs between both the pulleys 45, 46.

On the other hand, a stopper mechanism 48 and a position detection mechanism 49 are disposed for each of the rotation drums 33. As illustrated in Fig. 7, this stopper mechanism 48 includes a stopper lever 51 that has at its one end a locking claw 50 adapted to mesh with each of the stopper grooves 40 of the stopper plate 41, and a stopper solenoid 52 for acting on the other end of the stopper lever 51, so that the rotation drum 33 is prevented from being freely rotated through the meshing engagement of the stopper claw 50 of the stopper lever 51 with the stopper grooves 40 of the stopper plate 41 under a biasing force of the coil spring 44.

As illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8, the position detection mechanism 49 is made up of plural bores 53... extending through the front and back sides of each rotation drum 33, light-emitting elements 54 and light-receiving elements 55, both elements provided on the opposite sides with the bores 53 therebetween. As illustrated in Fig. 9, the bores 53 comprise concentrically-aligned six opening rows BS, B1-B5, and each pair of a light-emitting element 54 and a light-receiving element 55 are disposed facing each opening row. Herein, as illustrated in Fig. 8, the symbol marks 34 are disposed at equal intervals between A-U in the circumferential direction of each rotation drum 33, and codes representative of the positions of the symbol marks 34 are indicated at A-U based on the presence and absence of the bores 53 by utilizing the opening rows B1-B5. Along the BS rows of the opening rows are disposed bores 53 at equal intervals, through which the rotation speed of the rotation drum 33 is detected.

On the front lower side of the front panel 31 is disposed a card inlet/outlet 30 with a reader/writer unit 56 mounted thereto from the back side of the front panel 31.

The reader/writer unit 56 is enclosed by a magnetic shield case that has one side provided with a card inlet/outlet pocket 57 facing the inlet/outlet 30, and an opposite side provided with a card capturing pocket 58. A guide piece 59 projects sidewards from the lower edge of the card inlet/outlet pocket 57 to receive a bottom side of a card. Mounted inside the case are a card conveying device 60 having one end facing the card inlet/outlet pocket 57 and another end facing the card capturing pocket 58, a magnetic head 61 for both recording and replaying, which faces towards the inside of a card running passage of this card conveying device 60, a fifth detector 62 disposed at both ends of the card running passage close to the card inlet/outlet pocket 57, and a sixth detector 63 disposed close to the card capturing pocket 58.

The card conveying device 60 includes a pair of supporting base plates 64, 64 secured inside the case, pulleys 65, 66 with their shafts supported between the both supporting base plates 64, a guide belt 67 running the upper pulleys 65, 65, and a conveyor belt 68 running between the lower pulleys 66, 66. A conveyor motor 69 is coupled with one of the lower pulleys 66 so that a card is held between both belts 67, 68 and conveyed therethrough.

Now, the description will be made for an operation mechanism for the front side of the game machine 29. Three stop switches 70... for independently actuating the stopper mechanisms 48 of the corresponding rotation drums 33 are disposed below the display window 32; a start switch 71 for starting the driving motor 39 of the game unit 36 is disposed at a right end thereof; and an input switch 72 for inputting the odds of the player is disposed therebelow (Fig. 1).

The description will be made for a display-relating mechanism. Respectively disposed as data display sections are a prize condition display 73 having five vertically separated sections, respectively displaying prize conditions at the left upper side of the display window 32; a finish display 74 for displaying a game finish of the game machine 29 at the upper center; a big bonus display 75 for displaying the occurrence of a big bonus right at the middle center; a bonus display 76 for displaying the occurrence of a bonus game right at the lower center; and a data display 77 of a seven-segment, four-digit display for displaying the total of the points scored by the player at the right end. Further disposed are a game-ready indication display 78 at the left side of the display window 32 for displaying that the game machine 29 is ready to provide a game; five odds display lamps 79... respectively disposed at the right ends of the bet lines 35 of the display window 32 for displaying the bet line(s) on which the player has bet; and an analogue-type

scored point display 80 in the form of a bar graph and a digital-type scored point display 81 of a seven-segment, two digit display disposed on the side of the display lamps 79 for displaying the point scored in each time. Further provided are small stop display lamps 82 above the respective stop switches 70; a tray 83 disposed below the input switch 72 for receiving game coins discharged as prize, in which an outlet of a game media discharge passage extending from a coin discharge unit (not shown) disposed inside faces the tray 83; a game coin inlet 84 disposed above the start switch 71 as a game media inlet, in which a falling passage from the coin inlet is communicated with a coin selector (not shown); and a card-content display 30' is disposed on the right side of the card inlet/outlet 30 for displaying the recorded content left in the information card 24 inserted in the card inlet/outlet 30.

On the other hand, in Fig. 13, a reference numeral 85 represents a control device made up of such as a micro-computer for controlling various operations of the game machine 29, which includes a CPU 89, a ROM 87, a RAM 88, a sound IC 89, a level shifter 90, a driver 91 and a given electric circuit 92, as illustrated in Fig. 13. Electrically connected to the level shifter 90 on the input side are the position detection mechanism 49 incorporated in the game unit 36; the magnetic head 61 incorporated in the reader/writer unit 56; the fifth detector 62 and the sixth detector 63; as well as the stop switches 70, the start switch 71 and the input switch 72 disposed on the front side of the front panel 31; and other units such as an anticrime unit and a winning rate adjusting unit.

On the other hand, electrically connected to the driver 91 on the output side of the control device 85 are the driving motor 39 and the stopper solenoid 52 incorporated in the game unit 36; the magnetic head 61 and the conveyor motor 69 incorporated in the reader/writer unit 56; as well as the prize condition display 73, the finish display 74, the big bonus display 75, the bonus display 76, the data display 77, the game-ready indication display 78, the odds display lamps 79, the analogue-type scored point display 80, the digital-type scored point display 81 and the stop display lamps 82 disposed on the front side of the front panel 31. The sound IC 89 of the control device 85 is electrically connected to a speaker for generating sound effects disposed on the front panel 31.

Now, the description will be made for the operation of the game machine 29. The player first inserts the information card 24 into the card inlet/outlet 30 of the game machine 29 to turn on the fifth detector 62, thereby starting the conveyor motor 69 via the control device 85 to pull the information card 24 inside the reader/writer unit 56. Once the sixth detector 63 has been turned on by the

information card 24, the conveyor motor 69 is stopped via the control device 85.

During the conveying of the information card 24, the game-related information recorded on the magnetic recording surface of the information card 24 is read at the magnetic head 61 and the game-related information thus read is transmitted to the control device 85, at which the information is checked. The control device 85 first determines whether the identification code as read from the information card 24 is identical to the identification code recorded in the control device 85, so that when not identified, such as when a shop code or a date code is different, the conveyor motor 69 is restarted to discharge such an unauthorized card through the card capturing pocket 58.

When identified, the control device 85 displays the scored point stored in the information card 24 on the data display 77 based on the scored point code. For example, when the information card 24 is unused "100 Yen (Japanese yen)" card, a point of "5" is displayed on the data display 77.

At the same time as this, the control device 85 turns on the game-ready indication display 78 to inform the player that the game machine 29 is ready to provide a game, inviting the player to operate the input switch 72.

Then, the player sets the odds by operating the input switch 72. For example, when pressing the input switch 72 one time, the odds are set at "1" and the center bet line 35 of the display window 32 becomes effective and one odds display lamp 79 at the end of the bet line 35 is lit, and the value of "1" is subtracted from the displayed value of the data display 77 and the subtracted value is displayed. When pressing the input switch 72 twice, the odds are doubled so that the three horizontal lines 35 become effective, and the three odds display lamps 79 are lit. Thus, the value of "2" is subtracted from the displayed value of the data display 77. When pressing the input switch 72 triple, the odds become maximum so that all the five bet lines 35 become effective and all the five odds display lamps 79 are lit. Thus, the value of "3" is subtracted from the displayed value of the data display 77 and the subtracted value is displayed. In this embodiment, the odds are changed by changing the number of times by which the input switch 72 is pressed. Alternatively to this, it is possible to provide three switches, respectively displaying the reduction values.

After setting the odds by the input switch 72, the player operates the start switch 71. Whereby, the three rotation drums 33 simultaneously starts rotating at high speed. Specifically, upon the operation of the start switch 71, a start signal is transmitted, and the control device 85 simultaneously magnetizes the

three stopper solenoids 52, and at the same time, actuates the driving motor 39 of the rotation drums 33. Upon the magnetizing of the stopper solenoids 52, the stopper lever 51 is pivotally moved downwards about the shaft so that the locking claw 50 is released from the engagement with the stopper grooves 40 of the stopper plate 41. Accordingly, upon the driving of the driving motor 39, the rotation shaft is rotated together with the slip rings 43 via the speed reducing unit 15, the pulleys 45, 46 and the driving belt 47; and the rotation drums 33 are rotated integrally with the stopper plates 41 by the friction resistance with respect to the slip surfaces of the slip rings 43.

Accordingly, upon the driving of the driving motor 39, the three rotation drums 33 starts rotating at the same time; and the symbol marks 34 of the rotation drums 33 kept rotated are observed through the display window 32. Since they are rotated at high speed, it is impossible to recognize the symbol marks 34 one by one.

The control device 85 rotates the rotation drums 33 and at the same time turns on all the three stop display lamps 82, inviting the player to operate the stop switches 70.

The player subsequently then successively operates the stop switches 70 when each opportunity has come so as to stop the rotation drums 33 one by one.

Upon the operation of the stop switches 70, stop signals are transmitted from the stop switches 70 to the control device 85 so that the control device 85 demagnetizes the stopper solenoids 52 corresponding to the rotation drums 33. For example, when operating one stop switch 70, the corresponding stopper solenoid 52 is demagnetized so that the stopper lever 51 is pivotally moved upwards about its shaft by the spring force of the coil spring 44 and the locking claw 50 is meshed with the stopper grooves 40 of the stopper plate 41. Thus, a corresponding rotation drum 33 located just above the said stopper switch 70 is stopped. When the stopper switches 70 has been operated, a beep sound is generated from the speaker and the stop display lamp 82 above it is turned off. The stopped rotation drum 33 does not affect on the rotation of the rotation shaft or other rotation drums 33, since slip is caused between its inner circumference and the slip surface 42 of the slip ring 43.

Each time the stop switch 70 is operated, the corresponding rotation drum 33 is subsequently stopped, so that when operating all the stop switches 70, all the three rotation drums 33 are stopped and the symbol marks 34 are lined up with the bet lines 35 of the display window 32.

The control device 85 actuates a timer means (not shown) upon inputting a start signal from the start switch 71, and demagnetizes all the stopper solenoids 52 in a time set by the timer means, such as in 74 seconds, unless any of the stop switches are operated before the elapse of 74 seconds. Therefore, even in a case where all or some of the stop switches 70 are not operated, the three rotation drums 33 are automatically stopped.

Once the rotation drums 33 are stopped, the prize condition is determined based on the combination of the symbol marks lined up with the bet lines 35 with the corresponding lamps lit.

Specifically, the control device 85 previously stores various prize conditions corresponding to the respective combinations of the symbol marks 34, and determines whether a prize condition has been met by the comparison between this pre-stored prize conditions and the combination of the symbol marks 34 lined up with the bet lines 35 based on the detected signal from the position detection mechanism 49. For example, when the odds are "1", one bet line 35 at the center becomes effective, and when the same symbol marks 34, such as orange marks are lined up with this bet line, the prize condition has been met so that the content of this prize condition is displayed on the prize condition display 73, and a sound representative of the event that the prize condition has been met is generated by the speaker. As a value of this prize condition, a point of "2" to "15" at maximum is granted. For example, when three orange marks have been lined up, the uppermost lamp of the prize condition display 73 is lit and a point of "2" as displayed is granted to the player. Further, this scored point is displayed on the analogue-type scored point display 80 and the digital-type scored point display 81 at the same time, and the sound representative of the even that the prize condition has been met is generated by the speaker.

When the odds are increased, the rate of occurrence that the prize condition is met is increased since the number of the effective bet lines 35 is increased. As a result, there is a possibility that plural prize conditions are met at the same time. However, since the upper limit is set at "15" for the scored point, the player is granted not a point of "21" but only a point of "15" even in a case where the lamps for a "7" row and a "14" row are lit at the same time.

The prize condition and the scored point are displayed continuously for a given time and then the prize condition display 73 and the analogue-type scored point display 80 are turned off, while the displayed value of the digital-type scored point display 81 is set back to zero, and at the same time as this, the discharge unit

is actuated so that the number of game media, such as game coins, corresponding to the aforesaid prize condition, are discharged onto the tray on the front side.

In the said game, unless the prize condition is met by the symbol marks 34 of the rotation drums 33, shifting to the next game is immediately made subsequent to the stop of the rotation drums 33. At this point, no game coins are discharged onto the tray 83, the game is played by using the point owned by the information card 24 in the same manner mentioned above.

When game coins are discharged onto the tray 83 by the above-mentioned game, the next game can be played by insertion of these game coins in the same manner as in a case where a game is played by using the point of the information card 24, that is, in the same manner as in the conventional game machine 29.

In a case where all the game coins have been used during the game is being played, a game can be again played by using the point of the information card 24, following the above operation.

On the other hand, in a case where the player wishes to suspend a game even when the point of the information card 24 is left, he or she, who gets back the information card 24 discharged through the card inlet/outlet 30, goes to a check-out machine 93, and inserts the information card 24 into a card inlet 94 of the check-out machine 93 to receive the payment for the point left. In a case where game coins are left on the tray 83, they can be exchanged for a desirable prize in a common manner.

As illustrated in Fig. 14, the check-out machine 93 has a case 95 with an inclined surface 96 on which an amount display 97 and a pilot lamp 98 are disposed, and a vertical front surface 99 on which the card inlet 94 and a cash return outlet 100 are disposed. Disposed inside the case 95 are a card reader 101 for reading the content recorded in the information card 24 inserted in the card inlet 94, a card storage unit 102 for capturing and storing the information card 24 which has the recorded content read by the card reader 101, and a cash dispensing unit 103. The amount display 97, the pilot lamp 98, the card reader 101, the cash dispensing unit 103, etc., are electrically connected to a control unit 104.

Accordingly, when the player inserts the information card 24 into the card inlet 94, the card reader 101 reads the information of the information card 24 and transmits a signal to the control unit 104. The control unit 104 actuates the cash dispensing unit 103 based on the signal from the card reader 101 to discharge coins or bills equivalent in amount to the point owned by the information card 24 through the cash return outlet 100. When the return of the cash is finished in this

manner, the information card 24 is captured into the card storage unit 102.

In this embodiment of the game machine 29, game coins are used as game media. The game media of the present invention are not limited to game coins, but for example pachinko balls may be used. In this case, as illustrated in Fig. 16, an upper ball tray 105 and a lower ball tray 106 are disposed on the front side of the game machine 29, and a ball capturing unit in communication with the upper ball tray 105 is disposed inside the game machine 29. A ball supply trough 107 is disposed above a row of the game machines and each branch trough 108, which extends from the ball supply trough 107, is provided with a ball discharge unit 109. A ball falling trough extends from the ball discharge unit 109 and has an outlet facing the upper ball tray 105.

When a game of the thus arranged game machine 29 is played for the first time, the information card 24 is inserted into the card inlet/outlet 30 to start the game in the same manner as in the above embodiment. When a prize condition has been met by the game, the control unit actuates the ball discharge unit 109 to discharge pachinko balls by the amount equivalent to the prize condition onto the upper ball tray 105. When pachinko balls are thus discharged onto the upper ball tray 105, the next and subsequent games can be played by allowing the ball capturing unit to capture these pachinko balls.

In the above respective embodiments, the scored point is written on the information card 24 and a point is subtracted from this scored point and rewriting is made every time a game is played. The present invention is not limited to this. For example, the card issuing machine 1, the game machines 29 and the check-out machine 93 are electrically connected to a central administration unit made up of such as a host computer installed in a control room or the like of a game shop. When issuing the information card 24 by the card issuing machine 1, the card identification information, the shop code, or other administration information are written on the information card 24; the card identification information of the information card 24 is stored in the central administration unit; and the amount and/or point selected by the player, corresponding to the card identification information, is stored, as well. When the information card 24 is inserted into the card inlet/outlet 30 of one game machine 29 selected by the player, the reader of the game machine 29 reads the card identification information of the information card 24, and the amount and/or point of the information card 24 is read out from the central administration unit based on this identification information and is visually displayed by the game machine 29. When the point of the information card 24 is

displayed, a game can be played in the same manner as in the above embodiments. The amount and/or point subtracted as a result of playing the game, as well as the card identification information are transmitted to the central administration unit so that the stored content corresponding to this card identification information is rewritten as the amount and/or point left in the information card 24.

On the other hand, when a game was finished and the amount left is to be cashed, the information card 24 is inserted into the check-out machine 93 in the same manner as in the above embodiments for cashing. The check-out machine 93 reads the card identification information of the information card 24; reads out the amount and/or point left in the information card 24 from the central administration unit based on this card identification information; and the control unit 104 of the check-out machine 93 actuates the cash dispensing unit 103 based on this read-out information to pay out cash in the amount corresponding thereto through the cash return outlet 100.

Thus, it is possible to prevent unauthorized events such as unauthorized rewriting of the stored content of the information card 24, by storing the amount and/or point not in the information card 24, but in the central administration unit. In addition, since it is not necessary to provide a writer in each game machine 29, a simplified structure can be realized.

In the embodiments illustrated in the drawings, the rotation drums 33 are utilized as the game unit 36. The present invention is not necessarily limited to this. The symbol marks 34 may be graphically displayed by utilizing a seven segment LED, a cathode-ray tube display, or a liquid crystal display.

While in the embodiments illustrated in the drawings, the magnetic card is utilized, an IC card may be used for this. When using an IC card, another check-out system utilizing a exclusively designed reader/writer may be employed according to needs and circumstances.

(Effect of the Invention)

According to the present invention described above, when playing a game for the first time, or all the game media such as game coins have been used, a game can be played by the insertion of the information card without the necessity to go to a place for obtaining game media. When game media such as game coins have been earned by this game, it is possible to continue the next and subsequent games by the insertion of the game media, as well, so that the player can play a game either by the information card or game media whichever is preferable, based on his or her intension. Therefore, for the player, it is possible to eliminate the burden to

carry heavy game media by hand when playing a game for the first time, and for the game shop, it is not necessary to install a game media lending machine.

In addition, according to the present invention, when a prize condition has been met by a game, actual game media are discharged so that the real thrill of a slot game is unlikely to be deteriorated. Thus, it is possible to enjoy a game packed with excitement.

4. Brief Description of the Drawings

The drawings are to be served for illustration of the embodiments of the present invention. Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a card issuing machine. Fig. 2 is a block diagram of the card issuing machine. Fig. 3 is a cross sectional view of a card writer. Fig. 4 is a front view of a slot game machine. Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a game unit. Fig. 6 is a cross sectional view of a game unit. Figs. 7 and 8 are side views of a rotation drum. Fig. 9 is a partially enlarged view of a rotation drum. Fig. 10 is a perspective view of a reader/writer unit. Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a card conveying device. Fig. 12 is a cross sectional view of the card conveying device. Fig. 13 is a block diagram of a control device. Fig. 14 is a perspective view of a check-out machine. Fig. 15 is a block diagram of the check-out machine. Fig. 16 is a front view of the slot game machine according to another embodiment.

In Figures, 1: card issuing machine, 5: amount display, 6: amount selection switch, 11: card issuing port, 15: card writing unit, 29: game machine, 30: card inlet/outlet, 33: rotation drum, 34: symbol mark, 56: reader/writer unit, 77: data display, 78: game-ready indication display, 79: odds display lamp, 80, 81: scored point displays, 83: tray, 84: coin inlet, 93: check-out machine, 94: card inlet, 97: amount display, 101: card reader, 103: cash dispensing unit, 105: upper ball tray, 107: ball supply trough, 109: ball discharge unit

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